

# Element of History Pieced Together

## BOOK REVIEW

Nishacharer Nishidin  
by Abdur Rahim

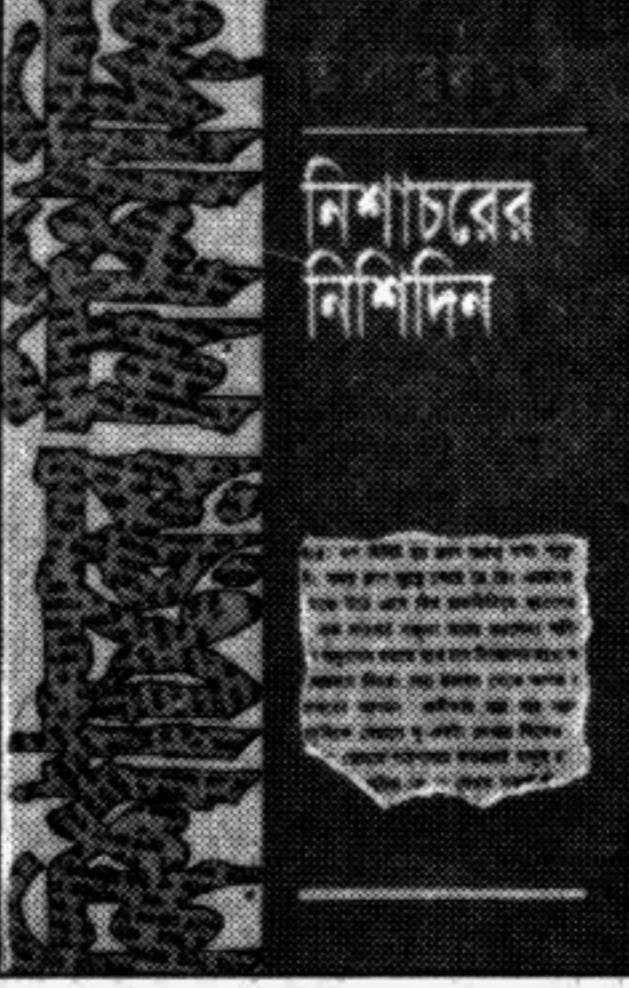
Published by: Nani Prakashani, Gulshan, Dhaka  
pp 234 Price Taka 150

JOURNALISTS do not write history. In the process of reporting about events, which later become part of history, they piece together elements of history. Abdur Rahim, a senior journalist of the country, has successfully done that job.

His premier publication, entitled *Nishacharer Nishidin*, is a compilation of columns he once wrote for the leading cine weekly of the country. These are not hard reports and to be precise can be termed news behind the news, a commonly used word in journalistic parlance.

The events cover some decades of our socio-economic and political history which the writer covered as an active journalist. One feels envious of the privileges he had in witnessing those events of our history. But he has differences with other working journalists. While most fail to record these events for posterity, Rahim has not failed in his responsibility.

From personal experiences to incidents of political significance, everything has come up as contents of the book. The insight, humour he has used in writing these pieces have made the book worth reading. Besides, he has related almost every piece with either an anecdote or a quotation from some of the leading celebrities. Some of those are very appropriate. However, in the process he could not hide his po-



tical belief. Reading between the lines a careful reader would discover in the writer a man with strong sense of nationalism and belief in progressive ideas. The writer did not compile the pieces in order of time as those were printed, nor did he explain why he had to change the order. It would have been better if he could maintain the order as these were printed.

The book, despite some of the criticisms, will be considered a big contribution to the history of this country. But it would be advisable if the writer makes corrections of some of the factual mistakes before its second printing. To mention a few, the cyclone of 1970 hit the coastal areas on November 12, not November 11, and declarations of newspapers were annulled in 1975, not 1974 and so on.

Before going into the contents, it would be fair to discuss the other aspects of the book. Some printing mistakes which have crept into the book

have compromised its quality, especially in the mini foreword the author has written for the book. In addition, it is difficult to understand why all the pieces do not carry the date line as to their first date of publication. Also, it would have been better if the writer could allow an editor to prepare the manuscript before publication,

porting Prime Minister Indira Gandhi after she imposed a State of Emergency in 1975 when faced with impeachment for resorting to unfair electoral practices. Ever since, the CPI has been trying to purge itself of this 'blot.'

Over the past decade, particularly since 1990, there has been talks of unifying the two communist parties, but the CPI has opposed it. However,

there is general agreement between them on the need to present a united front on the ground on broad policy issues such as opposition to the gov-

ernment's free market policies and the communal activities of the fundamentalist Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party.

Other political parties are advising the leftists to proceed with caution. They see the break-up of the Soviet Union and the fall of communism as an opportunity for leftists to learn from their mistakes and use their disciplined cadres to join the national political mainstream at a more 'realistic' and 'useful' level.

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brace of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, capitalist institutions with no sympathy for leftist ideals.

The hardships caused by the IMF and World Bank prescriptions might have produced a resurgence of leftist thinking, except that it coincided with Soviet disintegration, leaving the impression that there was no alternative to the free market.

But the longer they studied in the Soviet Union, the more anti-communist they became. They saw in living colour the extent to which the system failed to live up to its rhetoric. They learned to hate communism even before they finished their studies. On their return home, they gave another push to the anti-socialist bandwagon then gathering momentum.

Africans generally are communists, not communists. Although traditionally they like to live and do things together, they cherish their individual independence.

They want their own farms, and the right to decide what to plant, when and how to sell their produce, for what price and to whom.

Being ordered about by a central committee or a politburo is not to their taste, which is why Nkrumah and other leftist presidents had to resort to dictatorship to survive.

In addition to political difficulties, the extremely bad performance of African economies forced leaders such as Ghana's Jerry Rawlings into the em-

because in that case some redundancies could be struck out. He may have differing views but some of the sentences, which were used may be to dramatise the beginning of a piece, sound meaningless (like the one on page 130).

This is important for other reasons too. When the pieces were being published as column, readers were in a position to maintain the chronology. But for a reader of today or tomorrow, it becomes difficult to maintain the linkage (like the one on page 175 and the other on page 177).

Nevertheless, such holes are plugged by the drama of the incidents recorded. But in some places the attempt to theorise some ideas are not very effective. Could it be for the reason that at the time of writing the author had no subject or incident in mind to recreate (like the one on page 180).

Brushing aside all the criticisms, the book is an important contribution to our existing political literature and excels in its own right.

Last but not the least. The quality of printing could be improved further and the cover could be made more colourful and thematic.

Reviewed by  
Mahfuz Ullah

It is always worth celebrating the birth anniversary of the best man that ever lived on earth. That is what the book, *Eid Miladunnabi: Alor Pathay*, is all about. Naturally, the religion — Islam — which this great man introduced and preached ejaculated into the context. Yes, his name is Muhammad (SM).

Alongside the life of Muhammad (SM), the message of Islam has been zoomed in, on his teachings, in the book. It melts the confusions of religious practice into a nice — that to become an authentic student of the school of Muhammad (SM) is not bare easy, and again on the other hand, it is enthusiastically sophisticated.

The work of bewitching a function in jollifying the prophet's (SM) birthday (it's the day of his passing away as well) between the covers of a book is, no doubt, a deserving endeavour. It becomes rather more readable, not merely to understand the spiritual and moral aspects of the religion, but more than enough, to find a logical clarity in following the sermons of this celestial symbol — Muhammad (SM).

Now, one may well ask: "What kind of a man was he who awoke and cleansed the East, who in roughly a score of years in Arabia produced the greatest religious revolution known to history?" Well, this book may as well be the precise answer. Muhammad's (SM) greatest reform was the ousting of idolatry, while among other salutary measures he circumscribed polygamy, for bade adultery, usury, gam-

bling and the use of intoxicants. He abolished infanticide, discouraged slavery and proclaimed the intrinsic brotherhood and equality of every human being in the eye of Allah, irrespective of race and class.

This book — an anthology of five articles on prophet Muhammad (SM) in different fields and eight poems by four lauded poets, is all the way interesting and timely. The articles will be able to chisel out the yarning gap — to the readers — between the true awareness of Islam and its present practice by the followers in this Muslim-majority Bangladesh. The practitioners of Islam in Bangladesh nowadays seem to forget the real sense of the first ever eminent message: "Read, in the name of Allah Who created (96:1-2)." "Read" is not meant for parity reciting, it is — "conceiving" deep inside the soul using the conscious intellect.

In a country of thousands of mosques where millions of

people are supposed to be religious, in the very sense of the term, yet there are corruption, terrorism, killing, selfishness and falsity. *Alor Pathay* will make the readers realise the lacunae of being carried away from the dogma of Muhammad (SM). Leo Tolstoy comprehended it and said: "If that is Islam, then I am a Muslim."

Well, like above, an array of comments of prominent foreign and non-Muslim personalities make the book more optimistic.

Muhammad (SM) foresaw the current century's science and humanism 1400 years earlier. He knew about the hidden traits of the recessive genes. He, with a nagging confidence, insisted on planting trees. It wouldn't be unfair to say — in the context of today's global warming — that he was the father-ecologist. Likewise the present US Senator Harkin's Bill on Human Rights was called upon by Muhammad (SM) while he was preaching



out the humanistic values.

*Alor Pathay* ends with the poems of Asad Chowdhury and Mohammad Nurul Huda. Chowdhury's poem is a sort of prosaic confession.

The entire production of the book must be commended. There is hardly any misprint or spelling error. In this respect, the two editors Khwaja Qamrul Haq and Abdul Haman Thakur must deserve credit. Anyways, thanks to Bangla Academy for publishing such a book and making it available, at a comparatively cheaper price.

Reviewed by  
Yousuf Jamil

## The Statue of Lenin

Continued from page 9

"bourgeois" party would be against its founding principles and though rejecting the de-Stalinisation process set in motion in the Soviet Union by Nikita Khrushchev, ended up supporting the Chinese form of communism.

Proof of this ideological bonding came decades later when the CPM Politburo tacitly supported the military repression of the Tiananmen Square

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demonstrations in China in 1989, by simply not condemning them.

And though the CPM accepted the need for glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring) in the former Soviet Union, it wanted both concepts to be implemented within a Marxist framework.

The CPI, on the other hand,

bolstered succeeding Congress governments till it earned itself the opprobrium of sup-

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